



Richton Report

Volume I, Issue I

A Newsletter about the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Project in Richton, MS
Summer 2008

Editor's Corner

This is the first issue of the *Richton Reporter*, a newsletter by the Department of Energy, Office of Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR), for the Richton Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) process. The goal of the *Reporter* is to keep the public informed of the significant events associated with the SEIS process. This newsletter will be sent on a quarterly basis to those who have expressed an interest in keeping informed about the Richton project. The newsletter will also be available on the SPR website. (See *Contact* section for web address.)

RICHTON PROJECT: PAST AND PRESENT

In 2005, Congress required the Department of Energy (DOE) to expand the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) from its current 727 million-barrel capacity to 1 billion barrels (The Energy Policy Act of 2005, P.L. 109-58). DOE was given one year to select a new site from those previously studied in the 1992 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. On February 22, 2007, DOE announced its selection of Richton, Mississippi, as the location of a new SPR facility as part of the expansion project. The site was selected for its large and undeveloped salt dome, enhanced oil distribution capabilities, and inland location that is less vulnerable to the damaging effects of hurricanes.

As a part of the site selection process, DOE completed in 2006 the environmental impact statement (EIS) *Site Selection for the Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve* (DOE/EIS-0385) to evaluate potential environmental im-

pacts of the proposed facility. Now, as a result of further consultation with Federal and Mississippi state agencies, DOE is preparing a supplemental document to study the environmental impact of relocating some off-site components from the locations specified in the 2006 EIS. The changes are summarized as follows:

- Instead of withdrawing water from the Leaf River at New Augusta, MS, with a secondary water source being the Gulf of Mexico, DOE is considering other water sources and locations.
- For the oil terminal and tank farm, Bayou Casotte Harbor may be an alternative to the former Naval Station Pascagoula on Singing River Island.
- The brine discharge pipeline may be re-routed to follow an existing underwater right-of-way and terminate west of the location identified in the EIS.
- The pipeline and powerline rights-of-way associated with the proposed facility locations may change.

HUNDREDS ATTEND SCOPING MEETINGS

DOE conducted public meetings in Mississippi to solicit ideas for the content and scope of the SEIS. Meetings were held in Perry, Greene, George, and Jackson counties during April 7-10, 2008. Local residents from these four counties attended the scoping meetings with a combined turnout of over 500 residents. Both oral and written comments were received during the public scoping period, which concluded on April 29, 2008. The comments have been compiled and posted to the SPR website.



Public meeting in George County, MS

DOE continues to thoroughly review the numerous comments received and incorporate suggestions into the scope of the SEIS. The comments focused primarily on concerns about water intake from the Pascagoula River and the impact of brine discharge into the Gulf. DOE appreciates the concerns expressed in the comments and will address the concerns in the SEIS.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

In the next few months, DOE will begin biological studies and hydrological modeling. In conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the SPR office will

design water and endangered species habitat studies in the areas surrounding the various facilities and associated with the proposed Richton site. Brine dispersion modeling will also begin soon for the proposed brine

pipeline in the Gulf of Mexico. The results of the studies will be compiled in a draft SEIS, to be issued late this year or early next year. The draft will be available for public review and comment upon completion.

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